



U.S. Department of Justice

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MEDIA RELEASE
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U.S. ATTORNEY AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE ANNOUNCE GUILTY PLEA IN PASSPORT FRAUD CASE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and James P. Ennis, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Boston Field Office, today announced that **JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ**, 30, of Somerset, New Jersey, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Concord yesterday to a charge of making false statements on an application for a United States Passport.

RODRIGUEZ was indicted by a federal grand jury after his passport application was found to contain false statements by personnel at the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The indictment charged that **RODRIGUEZ**, a citizen of the Dominican Republic, falsified a United States Passport Application by claiming that he was a United States citizen, and that he was born in Humacau, Puerto Rico.

According to the facts described at today's court hearing and admitted by **RODRIGUEZ**, the passport application also set forth another individual's social security number. When interviewed by Diplomatic Security Service agents in December, 2004, **RODRIGUEZ** admitted that he was not a citizen, and that he had purchased the birth certificate and social security number in order to apply for a U.S. passport in the other person's name. **RODRIGUEZ** faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment when he is sentenced by U.S. District Judge Joseph DiClerico on June 27, 2006 at 9:30 am.

The case is being prosecuted as part of "**Operation Checkmate**", a joint initiative of the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement, and the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General. The goal of Operation Checkmate is to eliminate passport fraud, and thereby reduce identity theft while securing the Nation's borders. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael J. Gunnison.